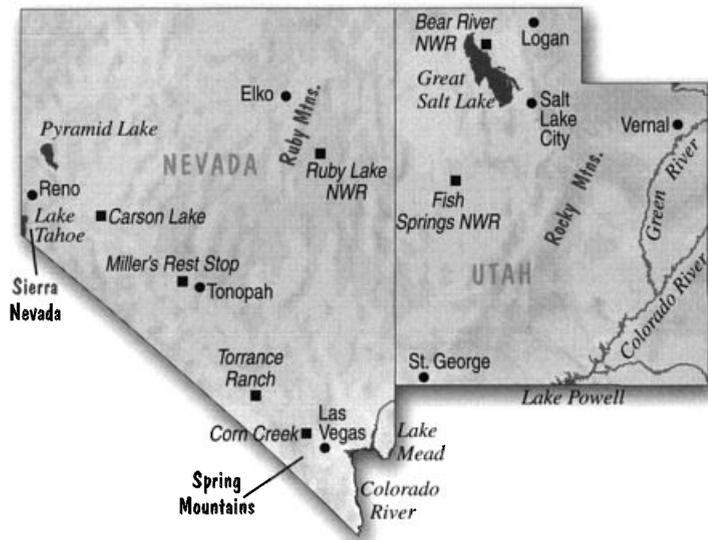


Great Basin



Rick Fridell

3505 West 290 North
Hurricane, Utah 84737
(rfridell@redrock.net)

Following a stellar spring for birding in the Great Basin, the summer nesting season was rather uneventful. Fortunately, after six consecutive years of drought, favorable conditions throughout the Region provided a much-needed boost for breeding populations. Highlights for the breeding season included potential nesting Zone-tailed Hawks in Nevada and Utah, successful nesting Least Bitterns in southern Nevada, and vagrant Common Ground-Dove, Magnolia Warbler, and Clay-colored Sparrow.

Abbreviations: Antelope I. (Antelope Island S.P. and Causeway, Davis, UT); Black Rock (Black Rock, Millard, UT); Corn Cr. (Corn Creek Unit, Desert N.W.R., Clark, NV); H.B.V.P. (Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, Clark, NV); Lytle (Lytle Ranch Preserve, Washington, UT); Miller's R.A. (Miller's Rest Area, Esmeralda, NV); Ouray (Ouray N.W.R., Uintah, UT); Red Hills (Red Hills G.C., St. George, Washington, UT); Zion (Zion N.P., Washington, UT).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

A Brown Pelican was a most unusual sight flying through the desert along SR-160 near the Sandy Valley turnoff, Clark, NV 17 Jun (DB). A Green Heron observed 4 Jun near Black Rock (KW, PL, RF) was slightly n. of

expected range. Long-tailed Ducks made unexpected summer showings in Utah, with a female lingering on the Hurricane (SR-9) Sewage Ponds, Washington 4 Apr–20 Jul (RF) and another photographed at Black Rock 4 Jun (KW, PL, RF). A male Ruddy Duck with black head (a rather rare plumage



Zone-tailed Hawk sightings have increased in southern Nevada and southwestern Utah in recent years. This Zone-tailed Hawk was one of a pair attempting to nest near Laughlin in southern Clark County, Nevada. Photograph by Jim Boone.

or morph) was also observed at Black Rock on 4 Jun (KW, PL, RF). Up to 13 California Condors spent the summer enthralling observers around the Lava Pt. area of Zion. Least Bitterns are very rare breeders in s. Nevada, so a pair fledging at least 3 young at H.B.V.P. was noteworthy (JBr, JHe).

HAWKS THROUGH TERNS

Zone-tailed Hawk sightings have increased in recent years in the s. portion of the Region; however, successful nesting has not been confirmed as yet. A pair was observed for the 3rd consecutive summer in the Lava Pt. area of Zion 9 Jun+ (ML, ph. LT, ph., †RF), but no nest could be found in the remote canyons. Surprisingly, a pair of Zone-tailed Hawks was also observed near Laughlin, in s. Clark, NV 5–12 Jun (ph., †JBo). The hawks here were defending a nest, but it is unknown whether they successfully fledged any young.

There were a few noteworthy shorebird reports in the Region. A Black-bellied Plover was slightly early 23 Jul at Soda and Carson Lakes, Churchill, NV, as was a Solitary Sandpiper 23 Jul at Carson L. (MMe, GS). Certainly the shorebird highlight of the summer was the Red Knot at Antelope I. 30 Jul (p.a., J&KB). A juv. Semipalmated Sandpiper was photographed at Carson L. 23 Jul (ph MMe, GS), and another was observed at H.B.V.P. 27 Jul (JHe). The only Least Tern observed in the Region was an ad. at Black Rock 4 Jun (KW, PL, ph., †RF).

DOVES THROUGH WARBLERS

If accepted, a wayward Common Ground-Dove observed at Lytle 19 Jun (LT) would furnish just the 3rd record for Utah. The only Yellow-billed Cuckoos this summer were reported from Utah at Black Rock 4 Jun (KW, PL, RF) and River Lane, Springville, Utah 15 Jul (AS, MMo). Vagrant Eastern Kingbirds were reported from two Nevada locations: Bonham Ranch, Washoe 4 Jun (ph. NB) and Las Vegas Wash, Clark 22 Jun (MMu). Red-eyed Vireos, always a surprise in the Region, were observed at Corn Cr. 9 Jun (M&JC) and Fort Buenaventura, Weber, UT 23 Jun (KP). A Winter Wren at Lava Pt., Zion 10 Jul (RF, LT) was noteworthy, as nesting has never been confirmed in s. Utah. Northbound Gray Catbirds were observed in Nevada 1 Jun at Indian Cr., Dyer, Esmeralda and 2 Jun at Miller's R.A. (GS). Two catbirds, including an apparently territorial singing male, were found at Black Rock 4 Jun (KW, PL, RF). A Northern Mockingbird 21 Jun in North Reno, Washoe, NV (HP) was a bit n. of expected range. Surprisingly, Brown Thrashers were reported on the same day (25 Jun) from disparate residential locations in Nevada: Reno, Washoe (FP) and Boulder City, Clark (JK, BR).

Northern Parulas were reported on 1 Jun from Corn Cr. (ph. JH et al.) and the Santa Clara R., near Baker, Washington, UT (LT). A female Magnolia Warbler was observed 2 Jun at the Circle L Ranch, Dyer, Esmeralda, NV (GS). Black-and-white Warblers were reported from Henderson, Clark, NV 5 Jun (TSu, fide JBr) and Boulder City, Clark, NV 18 Jun (JK, BR). American Redstarts were

found at two *Esmeralda*, NV locations: Arlemonte Ranch, Dyer 1 Jun (GS) and Miller's R.A. 15-24 Jul (GS, DM). Utah's 4th confirmed Prothonotary Warbler was photographed at Lytle 8-9 Jul (ph., †LT, JJ). A singing Ovenbird at the Bonneville Shoreline Trail, Weber, UT was enjoyed by many observers 18 Jul–12 Jul (†KP, ph. M&CS). Rounding out the summer warbler sightings was a female Hooded Warbler found 1 Jun at Sagehen Rd., Dyer, *Esmeralda*, NV (ph. GS).

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

A singing Clay-colored Sparrow was a great find 4.5 km e. of Crystal Peak, Millard, UT 1

Jun (†TSa). The only Rose-breasted Grosbeak was a female at Sagehen Rd., Dyer, *Esmeralda*, NV 1 Jun (GS). Singing male Indigo Buntings were reported from two seldom birded *Garfield*, UT locations: Paria River Ranch 1 Jun (RF, MMy) and Calf Creek R.A., Escalante N.M. 10-21 Jun (LT, PC, J&KB). A vagrant female Bobolink was at Miller's R.A. 1 Jun (GS). Although Common Grackle sightings are increasing in n. Utah, a lone grackle at Perry, *Box Elder*, UT 16 Jun (BB) was noteworthy. An apparent hybrid Bullock's Oriole x Baltimore Oriole hybrid was photographed 1 Jun at the Arlemonte Ranch, Dyer, *Esmeralda*, NV (GS).

Contributors and cited observers: John & Gisela Anderson, Betsy Beneke, Joel & Kathy Beyer, Nancy Bish, Donn Blake, Jim Boone (JBo), Jo Anne Branca (JBr), Kristen Comella, Peyton Cook, Marian & James Cressman, Rick Fridell, Jim Healy (JHe), Jim Holmes (JHo), Judy Jordan, Joe Kahl, Pam Larson, Marcus Lawson, Martin Meyers (MMe), Don Molde, Milton Moody (MMo), Megan Morvilius (MMv), Marian Murdoch (MMu), Fred Petersen, Harold Peterson, Kristin Purdy, Barbara Raulston, Terry Sadler (TSa), Greg Scyphers, Aaron Smith, Mort & Carolyn Somer, Dale Stahlecker, Toby Sulenski (TSu), Larry Tripp, Kevin Wheeler. ☺

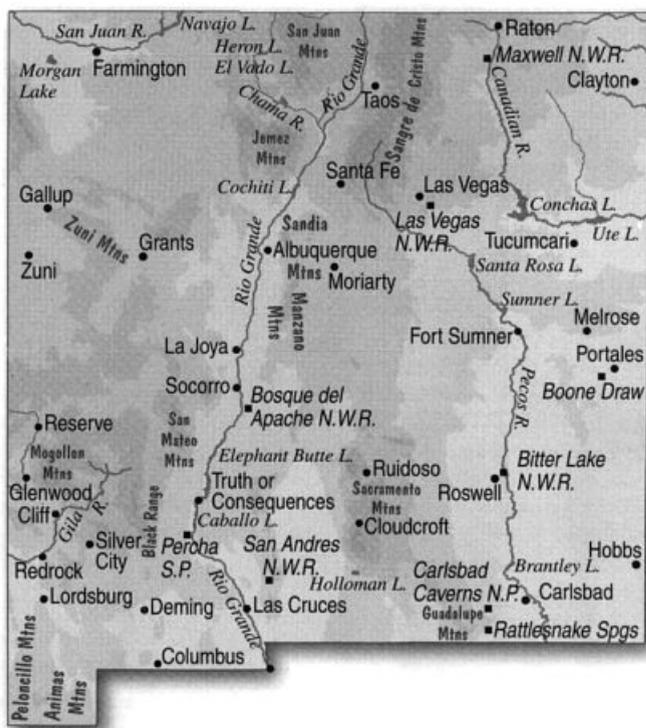
Summer 2005 was marked by warm and dry weather, but generous precipitation from both winter and spring resulted in healthy grasslands and recharged wetlands. Work on breeding birds proceeded on several fronts, and several rarities were found. Yet another species—Short-tailed Hawk—was verified in the state.

Abbreviations: B.L.N.W.R. (Bitter Lake N.W.R.); Bosque (Bosque del Apache N.W.R.); E.B.L. (Elephant Butte L.); L.V.N.W.R. (Las Vegas N.W.R.); Maxwell (Maxwell N.W.R. and vicinity); N.R.T. (North Roosevelt migrant trap near Melrose); R.G.V. (Rio Grande Valley); R.S. (Rattlesnake Springs area, Eddy).

GREBS THROUGH FALCONS

Several pairs of both Western and Clark's Grebes enjoyed an extended nesting season at Stubblefield L., with young of both seen on various dates 9 Jun–20 Jul (ph. DC); farther s., a Clark's pair with 4 chicks was at Bosque 9 Jul (CGL); both Western and Clark's broods were noted there 17 Jul (CR), and a Clark's with one chick was at Fort Craig 7 Jun (RD). High counts for lingering American White Pelicans were 38 at El Vado L. 11 Jun (DS) and 18 at Bosque 15 Jun (WW). Noteworthy for *Colfax* were single American Bitterns in the Maxwell/Stubblefield area 3 (CB), 5 (KG), & 17 Jun (ph. DC). One to 2 Least Bitterns summered at Bosque 15 Jun (WW) and 9 Jul (JP) and at B.L.N.W.R. Jun–Jul (GW), where breeding was suspected; another was at Bitter Cr., *Chaves* 18 Jun (GW). An ad. Tricolored Heron was n. to Bosque 3 Jun (JP). An imm. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** at Maxwell 5 Jul (ph. PH) provided a *Colfax* first and New Mexico's most northerly ever. An ad. **White Ibis** visited Bosque 24-29 Jul (CB et al., ph. JO). White-faced Ibis found favorable conditions in the Stubblefield L. area, where at least 50 pairs nested in flooded saltcedar and willow; eggs were found 1

New Mexico



Jun, nestlings were present 17 Jun, fledglings were seen by 30 Jun, and late nests continued active through Jul (ph. DC). An imm. **Roseate Spoonbill** reached B.L.N.W.R. 20 Jul (ph. JO), marking the 4th consecutive year for this species in New Mexico. A Ruddy Shelduck was at Texico 27 Jul (JO), while a Bar-headed Goose continued at Bosque Jun–Jul (m.ob, ph. CGL); although vagrancy is documented in both species, these were believed to be escapees. A Bufflehead was late at L.V.N.W.R. 4 Jun

Sartor O. Williams III

Southwest Natural History Institute

1819 Meadowview Drive NW

Albuquerque, New Mexico 87104-2511

(sunbittern@earthlink.net)